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Fox Valley Division
Midwest Region - NMRA
P.O. Box 1535
Arlington Heights, IL 60005-1535

The Semaphore

Fox Valley Division • MWR • NMRA

From the Desk of the Superintendent

- Richard Sweet
Superintendent FVD

Welcome to the Fox Valley division's 2007-2008 season. This year we will have more meeting dates, six to be exact. For a long time, we haven't had a meeting in November because we took a trip to Milwaukee for Trainfest. This year we will have both. The board thought this was a good idea because there are members who don't go on the Trainfest trip. For them, there is a big lapse in meetings, at that time. Having the meeting in November will make them feel more connected.

Having six meetings means more clinics. Here are some of the clinics scheduled for this year: "How to Get Your Golden Spike Award," "Building Bridges 12" to the Foot," "Railroad Oddities," "Winter Railroading," and "Boy is My Thumb Green." As always, check the schedule in this newsletter or on the Web site.

Prior to our October meeting, we will host the Midwest Region board meeting. This meeting will start at 10:30 a.m. and end at noon. If you would like to attend, you are welcome to do so. At noon, the FVD will be providing lunch for the board members and any FVD members that are present. If you don't attend the board meeting, be sure to come at noon for lunch. Our meeting will start as usual at 1:30 p.m., and the MWR board members will attend our meeting.

At our September meeting, the Contest Trainmaster will be

handing out a structure kit to any member that wants to enter our "Kit Bashing" contest, which will be held at the December meeting. The idea is to kit bash the structure into something else - the structure cannot be in its original form. The full rules will be given with the kit. The contests in October and November will feature a wall and the roof, respectively. If you take a kit, you must enter it in at least one of the Kit-bash contests: October, November, and/or December.

This should be a great year for model railroading and I will see you "on the rails" at our first meeting in September.

September Meeting

At our September meeting, our new Achievements and Contests Trainmaster, Jim Landwehr, will be hosting a double-bill: first a clinic, then a contest. Jim's clinic will be on the first step towards becoming a Master Model Railroader (MMR) - the Golden Spike Award. He'll show you how close you probably already are towards achieving this award. Jim will then hand out a structure kit to any member that wants to enter our "Kit Bashing" contest. Details will be provided at the September meeting.

This Month's Contest

The September contest will be line-side track section. The national contests pages of the National Model Railroad Association define line-side track section as:

This Year's Events

September 16, 2007

1:30pm, Gary Morava Center

General Meeting

Clinic – Jim Landwehr, How to Get your Golden Spike award
– Free model structure kit to kit-bash

Contest– line-side track section

October 21, 2007

12:01pm, Gary Morava Center

General Meeting

Clinic – Jim Spice, Bridge Building 12” to the Foot Scale

Contest– wall from “the kit”
– Lunch for members and MR BoD
– Layout tour after the meeting

November 11, 2007

10:00am – 5:00pm

Trip to Train Fest

– Details to be announced
No Contest

November 18, 2007

1:30pm, Gary Morava Center

General Meeting

Clinic – Jim Singer, Railroad Oddities

Contest– roof from “the kit”

December 16, 2007

1:30pm, Gary Morava Center

General Meeting

Clinic – Mark Llanuza, Winter Railroading
– David Leider, Lithuanian Railroads
– Swap Meet

Contest– kit-bashed structure kit from Sept. Meeting

“8. Displays On-Line and Off-Line-Model or models which include supplemental scenery not pertinent to the function of the model or primary structure. On Line and Off Line definitions are the same as for Structures”

On-Line “...are considered to be those normally owned by the railroad, or having rail loading/unloading facilities on the right of way.”

The definitions I quote are from <http://www.nmra.org/contests/modelcontest.html> .

Details can include mile markers, battery and relay boxes, weeds, or anything else you feel fit the criteria.

Time is tight - September 16 is only a few days away! So get out your X-acto knives and chop out that section of track. Bring it to the September meeting and garner the adulation of your fellow Fox Valley members, not to mention the possibility of cash prizes!

October, November, and December Contest

The October, November, and December contest will be based on the Model Kit that we'll hand out at this month's meeting. The purpose is to give you a chance to really exercise that grey matter. At the September meeting, you will be given the Mt Vernon Manufacturing Company, a Life-Like® model kit (pictured below). In October, you can bring in a wall made from the parts in the kit, in November, you can bring in a part of a roof, and in December, you can bring in the

“finished” model. The only catch to the December contest is that it should not be easily recognized as one if the four versions illustrated on the box. One additional warning: this is not for the faint of heart - the box clearly states “ages 8 and up.”

So make sure you get your kit in September, and we look forward to seeing you in October, November, and December, too!

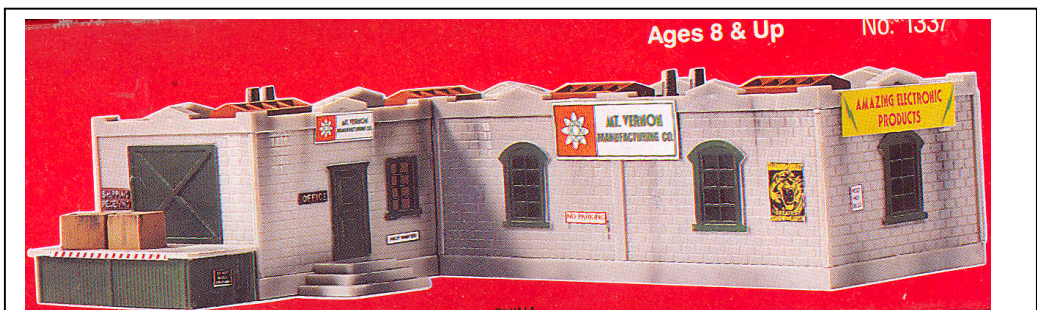
Hints, Tips, and Innovations

Share your expertise with other members

Rick Saviano- Publications / Membership Trainmaster

“How long did it take you to build your layout?” I’m sure each of you has heard that question, as well as “You haven’t gotten very far from the last time I was here.” I usually tell a story my father-in-law told me about the famous Impressionist painter, Renoir. Renoir was sitting in a Parisian café one afternoon, sketching on a napkin. A passerby stopped Renoir and asked, “Monsieur, how much would that little doodle sell for in the salon?” “Oh, perhaps 4,000 Francs.” “But Monsieur Renoir, that little sketch took you a mere ten minutes.” “You are wrong, my friend. This ‘little sketch’ took me 40 years to draw.”

My layout is either 6 months or 10 years in the making, depending how you'd define it. I started planning the layout when I first moved in our



Mount Vernon Manufacturing - The 3-month kit-bash challenge!

current house, and decided to try to blend continuous running (Christmas tree effect) and operations (bore the family effect). Nine years later, I was still planning. Then I saw the *Dream - Plan - Build* video from Kalmbach Publishing. It's a very inspiring collection of clips showing various techniques and frames of minds with regard to model railroading. And just like watching a cooking show makes you hungry, watching the video was just the kick in the pants I needed: I started construction almost immediately. Now, I'm not saying that all that planning was wasted. On the contrary, it actually helped the quick progress, once I finally got out my saws.

The coolest thing about building my layout was that I actually followed my own advice from the *Semaphore*, in addition to all the other information and idea sources. In fact, all the information sources almost prevented me from starting the layout. It seemed that every month, I'd read another interesting

article and start re-designing. After watching *Dream - Plan - Build*, I decided that I can build according to my latest plan, then modify as my needs change. After all, isn't "plan, run, plan again" part of what model railroading is all about?

How about You? Send me an email (saviano@att.net) and let me know how long your layout took, or is taking.

Sun City Open House

The Sun City Model Railroad Club will be hosting an Open House on September 23, from 10am to 4pm. Sun City is at the far reaches of the Fox Valley Division. The main gate is off Rte. 47 just north of I-90. There are three layouts, HO and N are in the barn, and the outdoor G layout is behind the barn. Stop by and see just how active the active adults have been at the Sun City Model Railroad Club!

Fox Valley Division Board of Directors

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This Year's Events (continued)

January 20, 2008

1:00pm, Operating session at Ted Schnepf's "Fox Valley O Scale"

No Clinic
No Contest

February 17, 2008

1:30pm, Gary Morava Center

Clinic - TBD
Contest - TBD

March 15-16, 2008

9:00am-5:00pm, High Wheeler

No Clinic
No Contest

April 20, 2008

**1:00pm, Gary Morava Center
Annual Business Meeting**

Clinic - Boy, is my thumb green
Contest - TBD

May 18, 2008

**1:30pm
Layout tours
(Details TBD)**

No Clinic
No Contest

Summer, 2008

Possible Field Trip

- Details to be announced

Location for General Meetings

General meetings of the Fox Valley Division are held at the Gary Morava Center in Prospect Heights (See map at right).

Why Do You Get This Newsletter?

You are a member of the National Model Railroad Association. Thank you for joining a group of people interested in and enjoying the Model Railroading hobby. The NMRA is divided into Regions and Divisions. You live in the Midwest Region and the Fox Valley Division.

The Fox Valley Division has around two hundred members and you are one of them. Membership in the Fox Valley Division costs you NOTHING. As a matter of fact, most times we give you things. How can we do that? In March each year, we hold a train show at Harper College in Palatine. The proceeds from the show support our activities throughout the year.

If you are interested in learning more about model railroading you can come to our meetings and sign up for our events. There you will meet and hear from people who want to share their knowledge of the hobby. We meet once a month at the Gary Morava Fieldhouse in Prospect Heights. Each year (our year runs from September through May) the Semaphore is mailed to the entire membership.

Welcome to the Fox Valley Division!



Next Meeting: September 26, 2007
1:30pm, Gary Morava Center
 Clinic – How to Get your Golden Spike award
 – Free model structure kit to kit-bash
 Contest– line-side track section



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED